
Scalar structures cannot impose semantic meaning

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Abstract

The semantic meaning of scalar expressions, such as *some*, is taken to only carry a lower-bound. This study challenges this view. By examining new non-canonical scalar expressions, we provide evidence that the scalar effects of these new expressions are similar to canonical Horn-scales. This structural similarity, we claim, highlights the problems in imposing meaning on the basis of structure. That is, we claim that by the same reasoning that we do not impose a unilateral (semantic) meaning on different expressions based on their (potential) scalar structure, this practice should also be questioned in relation to canonical scalar expressions.

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